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Morality- and identity-related antecedents of children's guilt and shame attributions in events involving physical illness

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It is theorised that guilt- and shame-related appraisals vary on two separate dimensions. Guilt implies an appraisal that one has either committed a moral transgression or that one has otherwise been involved in the creation of a morally wrong outcome. Shame implies one's appraisal that the current event or condition reflects negatively on one's identity. To test these claims, 206 7- to 16-year-old children gave shame and guilt ratings of three types of events that were drawn from the domain of physical illness and that were designed to elicit primarily guilt, primarily shame, or both emotions. The 12-year-olds and older children's ratings were fully consistent with our hypothesis. Younger children's greatest difficulty was in not attributing shame to protagonists who were involved in causing a moral wrong without there being the threat of an unwanted identity.

The appraisal-based elicitors of guilt and shame have been of substantial interest to psychologists in the past decade. The general purpose of the present investigation is to test the validity and the generality of a new appraisal-based view of the elicitors of each emotion across a wide age range. Specifically, it is our assertion that guilt implies an appraisal that one has been involved in the creation of a morally wrong outcome. This includes appraisals that one has

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committed a moral transgression, that one has been part of the causal chain leading to someone being undeservedly harmed or disadvantaged, or that one has otherwise violated a moral ought. Shame appraisals, in contrast, involve perceptions that the current event or condition reflects negatively on one's identity when viewed from the perspective of a presently important audience. This manner of conceptualising the essential difference between the appraisals involved in guilt versus shame is labelled the "morality-identity" approach. Essential features of this approach are that: (a) two separate dimensions are thought to underlie guilt- versus shame-related appraisals, that is, perceived moral relevance versus one's perception of how the event reflects on one's identity (Olthof, 1996); (b) shame-related appraisals are thought to result from realising how the self appears when viewed from a presently important perspective; and (c) the perspectival nature of shame-related appraisals ensures that, even when implying a negative evaluation of one's entire self, such appraisals may nevertheless concern only a particular aspect of one's identity, that is, the aspect that is brought into focus by the perspective that is taken.

The morality-identity approach owes a great debt to closely related traditions in the field, as reviewed below. However, because of its emphasis on a distinction that has not figured prominently in those more widely influential perspectives, the new approach can better account for the broad array of findings that are rapidly accumulating in this field (Ferguson, Eyre, & Ashbaker, 2000a; Ferguson, Stegge, & Damhuis, 1990, 1991; Olthof, Schouten, Kuiper, Stegge, & Jennekens-Schinkel, 2000; Smith, Webster, Parrot, & Eyre, 2002). In line with the developmental nature of some of the above work, and as a test of the developmental robustness of the morality-identity approach, we examined whether children spanning a broad age range seem to differentiate shame and guilt in the way the approach predicts.

One of the most influential conceptualisations of the appraisals involved in guilt versus shame was inspired by H. B. Lewis' (1971) assertions that the focus in shame is denigrating the global or entire self, whereas guilt is more focused on something specific that the person did or did not do. Lewis' distinction between the evaluative focus of each emotion has been expressed metaphorically as the difference between "*I did that horrible thing*" (shame) versus "*I did that horrible thing*" (guilt) (e.g., Tangney, 1998, p. 7, italics in original, cf. M. Lewis, 1995, 1997; Tangney, 1995; Thrane, 1979). Although the phrase "*I did that horrible thing*" is sufficiently ambiguous to include both a focus on the behaviour and on the outcome of that behaviour, theorising and research originating from this conceptualisation have characterised guilt primarily in terms of the focus that it implies on the individual's behaviour. Evidence congruent with the "self-behaviour" approach to differentiating the two experiences has been reported in several studies with adults. For example, Niedenthal, Tangney, and Gavanski (1994) concluded that adults will mentally reverse an experience of shame by undoing features of the "bad self", whereas they counterfactualise

a guilty experience by undoing elements of their "bad behaviour". In addition, in their descriptions of shameful experiences, participants spanning a broad age range, from middle childhood through adulthood, report hiding or withdrawing from the situation. These descriptions are consistent with Tangney and her colleagues' idea that shame is a painful experience in which the person appraises the self as fundamentally defective. In contrast, children's and adults' reports of guilt include more frequent references to approach tendencies, involving attempts to repair, apologise, or confess their wrongdoings, which is consistent with guilt's focus on specific behaviour that can be undone or atoned for (e.g., Ferguson et al., 1990, 1991; Tangney, 1991, 1992; Tangney, Miller, Flicker, & Barlow, 1996).

Despite the impressive array of findings that are supportive of the focus of guilt on one's specific behaviours or the concentration of shame on one's fundamentally defective self, there nonetheless are findings that are difficult to explain in terms of this distinction between the two emotions. Since it characterises shame- versus guilt-related appraisals in a way that is rather abstract, the self-versus-behaviour approach has little to say about the differential nature of perceived events eliciting guilt versus shame. In point of fact, an assumption underlying much of the research that views shame as based in self-focused appraisals, but guilt as founded on behaviourally focused appraisals, is that any perceived event that evokes shame in one individual might easily evoke guilt in another individual and vice versa. The results of various studies suggest, however, that: (a) although certain perceived events do arouse both emotions, they nonetheless pull for one of the emotions more strongly than the other; or (b) other behaviours arouse one but not the other emotion. For example, Tangney (1992) asked respondents to describe situations in which they felt guilty or ashamed. Results indicated that transgressions such as lying, cheating, stealing, infidelity, and breaking a diet, were most likely to elicit guilt, even though these behaviours also elicited some shame. Similarly, hurting someone emotionally tended to primarily elicit shame, but this behaviour also elicited guilt. However, other events, including failure, socially inappropriate behaviour or dress, and sexuality-related behaviours elicited shame, but virtually no guilt. In addition, shame, but not guilt, was associated with events involving a concern with others' evaluations of the self. Guilt, in contrast, was more strongly associated with a concern with one's effect on others.

Further evidence comes from a developmental study of Ferguson et al. (1991), who found that the older children in their study (approximately 11 years of age) reliably associated committing transgressions with guilt, but having made a bad impression on others with shame. Children perceived that such bad impressions could result from breaches of proper conduct or from committing moral transgressions that additionally would elicit guilt. In another developmental study, Olthof et al. (2000) found that children who were 9 years or older associated having caused harm to other persons with both guilt and shame.

Failures resulting from incompetence or from not having exerted sufficient control over one's behaviour that did not involve causing harm, were, however, related more highly to shame rather than to guilt. In a study with adults, Smith et al. (2002) also found that moral transgressions were associated with both guilt and shame, whereas experiences of incompetence and inferiority were associated more with shame than with guilt.

Finally, Ferguson et al. (2000a) found that behaviours inconsistent with one's preferred gender role were related to shame, but not to guilt. For example, their male respondents reported extreme shame reactions (but not guilt reactions) for the behaviours of crying in front of others, fainting at the sight of blood, or not being able to lift a heavy suitcase for a relative.

This evidence suggests, in our view, that (1) there are perceived events that elicit shame more than guilt because (2) they are primarily appraised as reflecting negatively on the person's identity, and only secondarily, or not at all, as indicating that the person was somehow involved in the creation of a morally wrong outcome. As such, the evidence is consistent with Ausubel's (1955) distinction between moral and nonmoral shame and with Lindsay-Hartz, De Rivera, and Mascolo's (1995) proposal that shame results from realising that one is what one does not want to be, that is, from the threat of an unwanted identity (Olthof, 1996). The above findings, as well as findings regarding the phenomenological experiences involved in feeling ashamed (Tangney et al., 1996), additionally indicate that shame involves a heightened concern with how others might evaluate the self. That is, the unwanted identity implied in shame-related appraisals might not only, or necessarily, involve people's own conviction that they are what they do not want to be. They may, more importantly, reflect the realisation that a real or imagined audience could perceive them as being who they do not want to be (cf. Crozier, 1998; Gilbert, 1998).

The fact that certain perceived events will promote reports of shame but not of guilt, not only has implications for conceptualising shame, but also for conceptualising guilt. In fact, when findings are examined from the self-behaviour view of shame and guilt, it is actually surprising that some events that elicit shame do not also elicit guilt. For example, why would some of Ferguson et al.'s (2000a) or Tangney's (1992) respondents not have focused primarily on the specific behaviours of crying in front of others or of having chosen the wrong dress, which could have elicited considerable feelings of guilt? Viewing guilt as dependent on specific behaviours also does not parsimoniously account for cases of guilt in which no specific behaviours can be identified, as in existential guilt, survivor guilt, or omnipotent responsibility guilt (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994; Hoffman, 1982; Kubany et al., 1996; Lindsay-Hartz et al., 1995; O'Connor, Berry, & Weiss, 1999).

To us, these considerations suggest that a focus on one's specific behaviour is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for a guilt-related appraisal to occur. Rather, it seems that people feel guilty when they perceive themselves as

being involved in the creation of a morally wrong outcome. Such perceptions include—but are not necessarily limited to—perceptions of having directly caused harm to others. Depending on the individual, they might also include perceptions of not having followed the commands of an authority who should be obeyed, or of being indirectly associated with causing an undeserved harmful outcome to others, or of having caused harm to oneself (as when breaking a diet), or of being on the receiving end of an unfair distribution of goods or benefits (as when being rich when others undeservedly live in poverty, or when being the survivor of a disaster). Our suggestion that guilt is not exclusively tied to specific behaviours, is supported by Ferguson, Edmondson, and Gerity's (2000b) finding that 5- to 12-year-old children reported feeling only slightly less guilty when another was disadvantaged without they themselves having committed any wrongful behaviour, when compared to events in which they clearly had harmed another.

In sum, and in line with claims that the self-behaviour distinction should not be taken as the only or even the primary basis for distinguishing guilt from shame (Harder, 1995; Smith et al., 2002; Wilson, 2001; see also Weiner, 1985; Weiner, Graham, Stern, & Lawson, 1982), our analysis supports Olthof's (1996) hypothesis that shame- and guilt-related appraisals vary on two separate dimensions. The dimension primarily associated with shame is people's awareness that their behaviour would lead a real or imagined audience to negatively evaluate the self, which implies the threat of an unwanted identity. The dimension primarily associated with guilt is one's perception of being involved in the causation of a moral wrong. If this proposition is valid, then it should be possible to predict whether a particular event will primarily be linked to shame, to guilt, or to both emotions.

The first aim of the present study is to test these claims by presenting respondents with descriptions of events that we predicted would be associated primarily with shame, primarily with guilt, or both. As is clear from the evidence discussed above, events that are related mainly to shame rather than to guilt are not difficult to find. A shared feature of such events is that the protagonist was not involved in causing a moral wrong, whereas the protagonist's behaviour or appearance, when seen from a perspective that is important to her, could reflect negatively on her identity. We will refer to such events as the "no wrong/unwanted identity events".

To our knowledge, no studies have been done to identify events that would elicit guilt but not shame. Nevertheless, the present analysis implies that such "wrong/no unwanted identity" events should exist, even though identifying them may be challenging. This is so, because the component associated with guilt—being involved in the creation of a moral wrong—easily leads the individual to imagine an audience that could think negatively about the protagonist. The audience might, for example, think that the protagonist was too clumsy to avoid harming another, or was too carried away by his/her own desires to let

moral scruples be his/her guide. Such imagined negative evaluations would transform a guilt-eliciting event into an elicitor of shame as well. Identifying examples of the wrong/no unwanted identity category depends therefore on finding events in which protagonists are involved in the creation of a moral wrong, without there being any behaviour that could reflect negatively on the protagonist's identity or without there being an audience that is likely to negatively evaluate the protagonist.

The above requirements led us to choose a particular domain of events for study, that is, events drawn from the realm of physical illness (cf. Brandt & Rozin, 1997; Weiner, 1993; Weiner, Perry, & Magnusson, 1988). In one case (the wrong/no unwanted identity condition), the person's illness did bring disadvantage to another, which we hypothesised would lead people to infer that the protagonist felt guilty. At the same time, the protagonist either did not engage in any behaviour that might give rise to an unwanted identity or, alternatively, the audience was thoroughly aware that the protagonist's behaviour reflected illness—rather than person-related causes, which is why the event was not expected to elicit much shame. In the events that were expected to be associated with shame alone (the no wrong/unwanted identity events), protagonists were not involved in causing a moral wrong, but they were depicted as behaving or looking strange in the presence of an audience that was not at all, or was only superficially, aware of the illness-related causes of their behaviour or appearance. Finally, in the wrong/unwanted identity events, the protagonists' foolish and disobedient behaviour contributed to getting ill or to aggravating some illness-related condition, which we predicted would be associated with both shame and guilt.

In line with the general aim of this study, we now turn to the issue of the developmental robustness of the morality-identity approach. Previous research has demonstrated that even young school-age children have considerable knowledge of which events would lead to guilt versus shame, even though such knowledge increases from age 5 to age 11 (Ferguson & Stegge, 1995; Ferguson et al., 1991; Harris, Olthof, Meerum Terwogt, & Hardman, 1987; Olthof et al., 2000). These results support the prediction that when compared to younger children, children older than approximately 9 years of age will better differentiate their shame and guilt ratings according to the types of events that we distinguished.

When evaluated from the perspective of Harris' (1989) eloquent discussion of children's understanding of self-conscious emotions in terms of their appreciation (or nonappreciation) of interlocking mental states, the above results imply that school-age children are increasingly able to deal adequately with the complexities of attributing particular mental states to a real or imagined audience. However, even by 9 years of age, we question whether children will be capable of not attributing shame to the protagonist in response to the wrong/no unwanted identity events. Our doubts rest on the complexity of the mental

states that children need to be able to juxtapose in response to these particular events to conclude that the protagonist would not feel ashamed. Stated briefly, not only do children need to appreciate that an audience might consider the protagonist's behaviour to be strange, but they also have to realise that the behaviour, although strange, does not have negative implications for the protagonist's identity, because the audience can be expected to attribute the behaviour to the protagonist's illness. Because of the more complex nature of the understanding that is required by the wrong/no unwanted events, it can be expected that the predicted effects for these events will not be found in relatively younger children. Exact age predictions regarding children's shame ratings of this class of events cannot be offered based on the current literature. So that we could examine the youngest age at which children's responses are consistent with the pattern predicted by the morality-identity approach, we made sure to include a very broad age range in the study.

Finally, the question of whether there are gender differences in guilt and shame has only recently received focused attention in the literature. Although some findings indicate that females are more shame- and/or guilt-prone than their male counterparts (cf. Bybee, 1998; Tangney, 1994), the evidence for gender differences in these emotions is extremely dependent on the assessment method and particular scenarios or events employed (cf. Ferguson & Eyre, 2000; Ferguson et al., 2000a). Nevertheless, care was taken in the present study to explore whether there were significant gender differences in children's reports of the two emotions.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were 206 children from three elementary and two secondary schools in two small towns in the southwestern part of the Netherlands. Children came from families of mixed socioeconomic backgrounds. They were divided into five age groups: 7-year-olds (14 boys and 16 girls, $M = 7$ years 3 months, $SD = 4$ months); 9-year-olds (22 boys and 8 girls, $M = 9$ years 3 months, $SD = 5$ months); 12-year-olds (17 boys and 18 girls, $M = 12$ years 2 months, $SD = 5$ months); 14-year-olds (29 boys and 27 girls, $M = 14$ years 1 month, $SD = 4$ months), and 16-year-olds (28 boys and 27 girls, $M = 16$ years 9 months, $SD = 8$ months).

Procedure and dependent measures

Testing the 7- to 12-year-olds. The 7-, 9-, and 12-year-olds were tested individually by one of two female experimenters in a quiet room at their own school. Testing of the 7-year-old children started by training them to use a 5-point scale that was to be used later in the procedure. The rating scale consisted

of five size-graduated vertical rectangles that were drawn on a white piece of paper. The experimenter first pointed to each rectangle and verbalized the appropriate label (not at all, a little bit, a bit, a lot, a whole lot). She then explained how the scale could be used, using as an example how scary different animals were. To check scale comprehension, children were asked to rate how strong several persons were. Children had no difficulties using the scale. The 9- and 12-year-old children received a shorter version of the scale training.

The experimenter then described the eight illness-related events representing three wrong/no unwanted identity events, three no wrong/unwanted identity events, and two wrong/unwanted identity events. To conserve space, Table 1 provides only one complete example of each type of event used. In the two wrong/no unwanted identity events not included in Table 1, the protagonist suffered an epileptic seizure while alone with his father who subsequently missed an important appointment or a teacher punished the protagonist's brother

TABLE 1
Examples of events representing the three conditions

Wrong/No unwanted identity

Jasper is a boy of your age and he also has a sister. Jasper's sister got a bunny rabbit for her birthday. She is very fond of her rabbit; she really likes it a lot. For Jasper it's not at all that great that there is a rabbit around, because every time Jasper gets near the rabbit, his skin starts itching and sometimes it even hurts. After a few weeks Mommy and Daddy say that something has to change and that the rabbit simply cannot stay in their home. Jasper's sister feels very sad about this, but the rabbit still has to go and after that Jasper doesn't have problems with his skin anymore.

No wrong/Unwanted identity

Patrick is a boy of your age. A year ago doctors discovered that Patrick is actually pretty sick. In such cases Patrick falls down to the ground and makes strange jerky movements. That is called a seizure. It usually doesn't last very long. And once Patrick has had a seizure, he usually can't remember anything. So, Patrick can't remember anything that happened. One afternoon, the kids in Patrick's class get to go swimming and so they go to the swimming pool. After Patrick has swum around for a while, he climbs out of the pool. Just as he reaches the side of the pool, he gets another seizure. He falls down and his whole body makes those jerky movements. A few minutes later the seizure stops and Patrick looks up to see that there are bunches of people standing around him.

Wrong/Unwanted identity

Joost is a boy of your age. Because of an illness, the doctor has Joost take some pills every day. If Joost doesn't take his pills, then he breaks out in red spots all over his face. One afternoon, while Joost is outside playing, his Mom calls him inside to come take his pills. But Joost doesn't want to stop playing and so he stays outside. Later on, his mother calls him inside again and Joost tells her that he already took the pills, but that's not true. The next day lots of red spots appear all over Joost's face. When Joost gets to school, all the children from Joost's class ask him about his face.

Note: The situation descriptions were translated from the original Dutch.

after the brother had hit other children for teasing the small statured protagonist. In the no wrong/unwanted identity events not included in Table 1, the protagonist came to class after having scratched his legs so badly that they started bleeding or the protagonist had an illness that made him prone to fall and, thereby, appeared at school wearing a helmet to protect him from fall-related injuries. Finally, in the wrong/unwanted identity event not included in Table 1, the protagonist's family had to cancel a planned trip due to the protagonist becoming ill, because he/she had ignored the mother's advice the day before to wear a warm coat when playing outside in the cold weather.

To maintain respondents' interest in responding to the events, we added some extra variation to the task by including four transgression events that were not related to illness. Since these additional events are not relevant for the present purposes, respondents' judgements of these events will not be analysed in this study. All 12 events were presented in a fixed random order. Each event featured a protagonist of the same sex as the child. All events were presented in a single session of about 20 minutes.

In the present study, we focus on two of the several types of ratings that participants made about each event, namely, the feelings that they projected on to the protagonist and their own imagined feelings in the same event. These feelings were measured by presenting participants with feeling labels (ashamed; guilty). Use of these labels, as opposed to descriptions of experiential correlates of the two emotions that are more commonly employed in this area (Ferguson, Stegge, Miller, & Olsen, 1999; Tangney, Wagner, & Gramzow, 1989), was deemed appropriate in this age range. Their appropriateness was substantiated by Olthof et al (2000), who found no systematic differences in children's answers as a function of whether guilt and shame were rated in terms of labels versus experiential correlates of the two emotions. Accordingly, the projected emotion questions were: "Do you think that [protagonist's name] feels ashamed? Does she (he) feel not ashamed at all, does she (he) feel ashamed a little bit, a bit, a lot, or a whole lot?" While asking this question, the experimenter pointed to the appropriate rectangles of the scale. The experimenter then asked the same question for guilt. The imagined emotion questions were: "Do you think that you would feel ashamed (guilty)?" Children gave the different types of ratings in one of three different orders, so that each type of rating appeared approximately equally often in each position. Within each order, the shame questions always preceded the guilt questions.

Testing the 14- and 16-year-olds. The older children received a paper-and-pencil version of the same interview that was administered by one of the same two female experimenters who interviewed the younger children. The older children received written instructions in which an example was used to illustrate how the rating scales could be used to express one's thoughts or feelings. Instructions stressed that there were no correct answers and that the

researchers were interested in how they felt about the events that would be presented.

RESULTS

Preliminary analyses

We first examined whether the different events representing the wrong/no unwanted identity, no wrong/unwanted identity, and wrong/unwanted identity conditions were sufficiently similar to one another to justify aggregating children's shame or guilt ratings in each condition. This was done by carrying out two separate hierarchical cluster analyses (Ward's method) for the projected and imagined ratings. In each analysis, the eight events constituted the to-be-clustered cases and the mean shame and guilt ratings of each event that children gave as a group served as the variables. Both cluster analyses yielded clear three-cluster solutions that were virtually identical to each other and that corresponded exactly to our wrong/no unwanted identity, no wrong/unwanted identity, and wrong/unwanted identity conditions. This justified averaging the projected and imagined shame and guilt ratings within each condition.

We subsequently examined whether the pattern of results obtained in the different conditions varied substantially as a function of whether children had rated the protagonist's feelings or projected their own feelings. Each of these ratings was subjected to a 5 (Age) \times 2 (Gender) \times 3 (Type of Event: wrong/no unwanted identity, no wrong/unwanted identity, and wrong/unwanted identity) \times 2 (Type of Judgement: guilt vs. shame) mixed-design ANOVA. There were very few differences between the statistically significant effects found for the projected versus imagined emotion ratings. Pearson product-moment correlations were also computed between the projected and imagined shame (or guilt) ratings in each condition. The resulting correlations were all statistically significant ($ps < .001$), ranging from .67 to .77. Based on these findings, it was deemed appropriate to average children's projected and imagined shame (or guilt) ratings. All subsequent analyses were based on the aggregate emotion scores.

Main analyses

Children's differentiation of shame and guilt. The aggregate shame and guilt scores were subjected to a 5 (Age) \times 2 (Gender) \times 3 (Type of Event: wrong/no unwanted identity, no wrong/unwanted identity, and wrong/unwanted identity) \times 2 (Type of Judgement: shame vs. guilt) mixed-design ANOVA. Four predictions were made regarding differences that should be obtained between children's ratings of shame and guilt within certain conditions or between the conditions for each emotion. Specifically, we anticipated that: (1) ratings of guilt should exceed those for shame in the wrong/no unwanted identity

condition; (2) ratings of guilt should be lower than those for shame in the no wrong/unwanted identity condition; (3) ratings of shame in the wrong/no unwanted identity condition should be lower than those in the wrong/unwanted identity condition; and (4) ratings of guilt in the no wrong/unwanted identity condition should be lower than those in the wrong/unwanted identity condition. The four predictions combined imply that we should have found a statistically significant Type of Event \times Type of Judgement interaction, which was indeed found in addition to significant main effects of Type of Event and Type of Judgement (see Table 2, upper panel).

Two one-way analyses of variance were conducted treating children's shame and guilt ratings as the within-subjects factor to ascertain whether predictions 1 and 2 were supported. The means in the upper panel of Table 2 reveal that our predictions were confirmed. Significantly higher ratings of guilt than shame were provided in the wrong/no unwanted identity condition, whereas significantly lower ratings of guilt than shame were offered in the no wrong/unwanted identity condition. Two additional ANOVAs were conducted to examine our third and fourth predictions. In the first, we conducted a one-way ANOVA, involving Type of Event (wrong/no unwanted identity vs. wrong/unwanted identity), on children's shame ratings. As can be seen in Table 2 (upper panel), children's ratings of shame in response to the wrong/no unwanted identity events were significantly lower than those in response to the wrong/unwanted identity events. In the second one-way ANOVA on children's guilt ratings, involving Type of Event (no wrong/unwanted identity versus wrong/unwanted identity), we found that children's ratings of guilt in the no wrong/unwanted identity events were indeed statistically significantly lower than those in the wrong/unwanted identity events.

Age-related differences. Our analysis of to-be-expected age-related differences in the introduction section, implies that the Type of Event \times Type of Judgement interaction discussed above should be qualified by a significant three-way interaction of Age \times Type of Event \times Type of Judgement. Actually, several effects involving age were statistically significant, including Age \times Type of Event, $F(8, 388) = 3.74, p < .001$; Age \times Type of Judgement, $F(4, 196) = 6.60, p < .001$; and the predicted Age \times Type of Event \times Type of Judgement interaction, $F(8, 388) = 10.75, p < .001$. The mean ratings representing the latter interaction are presented in the lower panels of Table 2. To further partition the predicted three-way interaction, separate 2 (Type of Event) \times 2 (Type of Judgement) fully within-subjects ANOVAs were conducted on the emotion ratings within each age group, as seen in Table 2. Table 2 reveals that the predicted Type of Event \times Type of Judgement interaction was not significant for the 7-year-olds' ratings (although it was marginally significant $p = .08$), but it did reach significance for all older groups' ratings.

We further examined these interactions for each age group separately by

TABLE 2
Means (*SDs* in parentheses) and ANOVA results representing the interactions of Type of Event (TE) × Type of Judgement (TJ) (upper panel), and of Age × Type of Event × Type of Judgement (lower panels) in children's ratings of elicited emotions

<i>Judgement</i>	<i>Type of event</i>			<i>Analyses of variance</i>		
	<i>w/nui</i>	<i>nw/ui</i>	<i>w/ui</i>	<i>Effect</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>
All ages						
Shame	2.12 _a ¹ (0.86)	3.31 _d (0.93)	3.05 ² (0.92)	TE	(2, 195)	89.09***
				TJ	(1, 196)	76.78***
Guilt	2.51 _b (0.90)	2.03 _c ³ (0.89)	3.19 ⁴ (0.99)	TE × TJ	(2, 195)	171.83***
Age 7						
Shame	2.37 _a ¹ (1.23)	3.07 _d (1.20)	2.88 ² (1.28)	TE	(2, 28)	7.31**
				TJ	(1, 29)	3.00
Guilt	2.53 _a (1.12)	2.68 _c ³ (1.09)	2.73 ³ (1.17)	TE × TJ	(2, 28)	2.70
Age 9						
Shame	2.34 _a ¹ (0.69)	3.19 _d (0.84)	3.39 ² (0.78)	TE	(2, 28)	22.72***
				TJ	(1, 29)	27.54***
Guilt	2.23 _a (0.72)	2.20 _c ³ (0.78)	2.80 ⁴ (0.98)	TE × TJ	(2, 28)	21.33***
Age 12						
Shame	2.11 _a ¹ (0.76)	3.17 _d (0.91)	3.05 ² (0.82)	TE	(2, 33)	23.24**
				TJ	(1, 34)	7.06*
Guilt	2.60 _b (0.89)	1.77 _c ³ (0.72)	3.40 ⁴ (0.94)	TE × TJ	(2, 33)	69.24***
Age 14						
Shame	2.06 _a ¹ (0.84)	3.46 _d (0.91)	3.05 ² (0.94)	TE	(2, 54)	41.33***
				TJ	(1, 55)	18.20***
Guilt	2.57 _b (0.89)	1.78 _c ³ (0.81)	3.44 ⁴ (0.91)	TE × TJ	(2, 54)	108.98***
Age 16						
Shame	1.93 _a ¹ (0.73)	3.46 _d (0.80)	2.97 ² (0.77)	TE	(2, 53)	40.26***
				TJ	(1, 54)	17.55***
Guilt	2.54 _b (0.87)	2.01 _c ³ (0.83)	3.25 ⁴ (0.83)	TE × TJ	(2, 53)	78.79***

w/nui = wrong/no unwanted identity; nw/ui = no wrong/unwanted identity; w/ui = wrong/unwanted identity.

Subscripts and superscripts reflect the results of the follow-up one-way ANOVAs conducted for each age group. Alphanumerical subscripts reflect the columnwise guilt vs. shame comparisons within each of the w/nui and nw/ui conditions. Means compared within columns that do not share an identical subscript differ significantly. Numerical superscripts reflect the row-wise w/nui vs. w/ui and nw/ui vs. w/ui comparisons for ratings of shame and guilt, respectively. Means compared within rows that do not share an identical superscript differ significantly. **p* < .05; ***p* < .01; ****p* < .001.

carrying out the four one-factor ANOVAs that were described above. As shown in the lower panels of Table 2, the results for the 12-, 14-, and 16-year-olds were fully consistent with our predictions. Like the older children, the 9-year-olds' ratings showed the predicted Type of Event \times Type of Judgement interaction, and their pattern of ratings confirmed three of the four predictions that were made. However, unlike the older children, the 9-year-olds did not offer statistically significant greater ratings of guilt than shame in the wrong/no unwanted identity condition. Results for the 7-year-old children revealed that their ratings confirmed only two out of four specific predictions. Specifically, they made lower ratings of guilt than shame in the no wrong/unwanted identity events and they also offered lower ratings of shame in the wrong/no unwanted identity events compared to wrong/unwanted identity events.

Gender-related differences. In addition to the statistically significant effects reported above for the 5 (Age) \times 2 (Gender) \times 3 (Type of Event) \times 2 (Type of Judgement) mixed-design ANOVA, this analysis also yielded a significant main effect of Gender, $F(1, 196) = 4.22, p < .05$, that was qualified by a significant Gender \times Type of Event \times Type of Judgement interaction $F(2, 195) = 3.89, p < .05$. The means representing this interaction are presented in Table 3. This three-way interaction was further partitioned by conducting six follow-up ANOVAs, each including Gender as the only between-subjects factor, for each of the three types of events \times two types of judgement combinations. Table 3 indicates that girls compared to boys gave somewhat higher shame ratings in the conditions

TABLE 3
Means (*SDs* in parentheses) representing the Gender
 \times Type of Event \times Type of Judgement interaction

	<i>Type of Event</i>		
	<i>w/nui</i>	<i>nw/ui</i>	<i>w/ui</i>
Shame			
Boys	2.13 (0.88)	3.23 (0.92)	2.94 (0.91)
Girls	2.11 (0.84)	3.41 (0.93)	3.17 (0.92)
Guilt			
Boys	2.38 (0.85)	2.08 (0.91)	3.08 (1.05)
Girls	2.66 (0.93)	1.98 (0.87)	3.31 (0.89)

w/nui = wrong/no unwanted identity; *nw/ui* = no wrong/unwanted identity; *w/ui* = wrong/unwanted identity.

that were meant to elicit an unwanted identity and somewhat greater guilt ratings in the conditions in which the protagonist was associated with causing a moral wrong. However, these gender differences were statistically significant only for girls' relative to boys' ratings of guilt in the wrong/no unwanted identity condition.

Ancillary data: Manipulation checks. Characterisation of the stories in terms of morality and identity would be more convincing if supported by manipulation check data. Because the shame and guilt ratings of the 12-year-old or older children conformed exactly to our predictions, we deemed it most practical to assess whether individuals of 12 years or older perceived our manipulations as intended. Accordingly, additional manipulation check data were collected from 4 boys and 6 girls in the 12–16 age range and from 4 men and 24 women in the 23–65 age range. Seven of the children were from the United States (Utah) and all other respondents were Dutch. Respondents used a 5-point scale to rate each of the stories described before in terms of moral relevance and in terms of their relevance to identity issues. Because moral relevance and relevance to identity issues were operationalised in several different ways in the stories, three different morality-related and three different identity-related questions were asked for each story. The morality questions were: (1) “Does [protagonist] have the feeling that she/he is the cause of something bad that happened to someone else in the story?”; (2) “Does [protagonist] have the feeling that what she/he did is actually very bad?”; and (3) “Does [protagonist] have the feeling that what happened is actually unfair for someone else in the story?” The identity questions were: (1) “Does [protagonist] have the feeling that [audience] think(s) she/he’s kind of strange?”; (2) “Does [protagonist] have the feeling that [audience] think(s) she/he’s a bit crazy or nuts?”; and (3) “Does [protagonist] have the feeling that [audience] think(s) what she/he did was pretty stupid?”

The morality-related ratings of all wrong/no unwanted identity stories were combined into one single morality rating indicating the perceived moral relevance of this type of scenario. The same was done for the morality-related ratings of the no wrong/unwanted identity and the wrong/unwanted identity stories and for the identity ratings of all three story types. The resulting combined morality and identity ratings for each story type were subsequently analysed in a 2 (Gender) \times 3 (Type of Event: wrong/no unwanted identity, no wrong/unwanted identity, and wrong/unwanted identity) \times 2 (Type of Judgement: identity vs. morality ratings) mixed-design ANOVA. Because preliminary separate analyses on children’s and adults’ ratings yielded virtually identical results, only the results for the group as a whole are reported here.

The analysis yielded a significant Type of Event \times Type of Judgement interaction $F(2,35) = 93.08$, $p < .001$ and there were no significant effects including Gender. Subsequent analyses revealed that: (1) the morality ratings of

the wrong/no unwanted identity stories ($m = 3.32$) were higher than the identity ratings of these same stories ($m = 1.64$) $F(1, 36) = 117.45$, $p < .001$; (2) the identity ratings of the no wrong/unwanted identity stories ($m = 3.46$) were higher than the morality ratings of these same stories ($m = 1.70$) $F(1, 36) = 168.31$, $p < .001$; (3) the identity ratings of the wrong/no unwanted identity stories ($m = 1.64$) were lower than those of the wrong/unwanted identity stories ($m = 3.10$) $F(1, 36) = 93.55$, $p < .001$; and (4) the morality ratings of the no wrong/unwanted identity stories ($m = 1.70$) were lower than those of the wrong/unwanted identity stories ($m = 3.36$) $F(1, 36) = 124.49$, $p < .001$. Clearly, these findings provide strong support for how we characterised the three types of stories.

DISCUSSION

The first aim of the present study was to examine the view that guilt implies an appraisal of having been involved in the creation of a moral wrong and that shame implies an appraisal that one's condition or appearance would lead real or imagined audiences to negatively evaluate the self. The results for the oldest three age groups overwhelmingly supported these hypotheses. These children's guilt and shame ratings matched in all respects the four predictions derived from the overall hypothesis.

One might argue that a focus on the badness of the protagonists' behaviours accounts for children's relatively high ratings of guilt in response to the wrong/no unwanted identity events. This interpretation seems implausible to us, however. It is doubtful that the health-related conditions that directly or indirectly caused problems for others in these situations at all qualify as "behaviours" of the protagonist. We suggest, instead, that older children appreciated that the protagonist's condition undeservedly disadvantaged others, regardless of whether the protagonist had behaved in any specific way. In short, our findings imply that perceiving the self as involved, however indirectly, in the creation of a moral wrong is much more central to the elicitation of guilt than is focusing on a specific behavioural action.

It could be argued that a subtle reinterpretation of the self-versus-behaviour approach is all that is needed to account for these findings. Specifically, the phrase "I *did* that *thing*" that characterises guilt according to this approach (Tangney, 1998) could be taken to not only imply a focus on the person's behaviour, but also a focus on "the thing done", which, in our case, would be the undesirable outcome of the event in which the person was involved. This modification would imply that the guilt occurring in our "no behaviour" events was elicited by the undesirable outcome. Yet, even this modification presents difficulties in accounting for results in other conditions. Specifically, it would not explain why participants reported *so little guilt* in response to the no wrong/unwanted identity events. Why would children *not* have focused on either the

specific behaviour of, for example, scratching one's itching legs, or the specific outcome of that behaviour, and report guilt as a consequence? To us, it seems that the answer is that neither the behaviour nor the outcome were morally relevant, which is why we prefer the morality/identity approach as an explanation for the entire pattern of findings in the present study as well as other findings that are inconsistent with the view that guilt is elicited by what one did or the thing done (e.g., Ferguson et al., 2000a).

When viewed from the perspective of the self-versus-behaviour analysis of shame and guilt, one might argue that the older children gave relatively high ratings of shame in the no wrong/unwanted identity condition because they thought the protagonists saw themselves as fundamentally flawed. The current findings suggest a somewhat subtle modification to this idea. It should be remembered that the shame ratings in the no wrong/unwanted identity condition were given in response to events that gave the protagonists little reason to think badly of themselves, but that took place in the presence of an audience that might make unfavourable inferences about the protagonist. This could mean that shame-related appraisals do not necessarily or only reflect the shamed individual's internalised negative judgements about the self. They may involve, instead, the individual's recognition that "his behaviour shows him, or seems to show him, to be a particular kind of person" (Crozier, 1998, p. 278). Accordingly, even though shame-related appraisals may imply a global negative judgement about the self, they are also likely to include an awareness that such a judgement is tied to a particular perspective on the self. At the very least, these findings support the need for further research concerning the complex issue of whether shame occurs only when a real or imagined "other" is seen to negatively evaluate the self or also when there is absolutely no threat of outside negative judgements (e.g., Ausubel, 1955; Ferguson et al., 2000b; Goffman, 1956; Smith et al., 2002; Tangney, 2000).

It could further be argued that our data provide less than convincing support for the above account of shame and guilt because: (1) the situations used in this study were all drawn from the domain of medical illness; (2) children's differential shame and guilt responses to the three types of situations could have been caused by aspects of the situations that are not relevant to our theoretical position (e.g., causing problems for family members in the wrong/no unwanted identity situations, but family members not being involved in the no wrong/unwanted identity situations); and (3) the study was carried out in the Netherlands and the event descriptions and questions were phrased in Dutch.

In terms of the first issue, it should be emphasised that there is a considerable literature on shame in relation to different stigmatising illnesses or disabilities in children (Lewis, 1998; Oostrom, Schouten, Olthof, Peters, & Jennekens-Schinkel, 2000), although the domain of physical illness has not been a focus of mainstream empirical research on guilt/shame. It should also be noted that children's shame and guilt ratings of Olthof et al.'s (2000) nonillness-related

equivalents of the present study's no wrong/unwanted identity and wrong/unwanted identity events, were quite similar to those obtained in the present study.

In terms of the audience characteristic confound, we cannot logically exclude the possibility that the different audiences in the wrong/no unwanted identity and the no wrong/unwanted identity conditions affected children's shame and guilt ratings, but we doubt whether this confound can explain the pattern of shame and guilt ratings obtained. In the only published study that we could find examining how audience characteristics differ in shame versus guilt eliciting events (Tangney et al., 1996), participants judged, in a nonmutually exclusive manner, whether the audiences present were "loved ones", "someone liked", "someone disliked", "acquaintance", or "stranger". Tangney et al. found one statistically significant difference in the audiences reported to be present, which revealed that acquaintances were present in 31% of the shame-related events and in 20% of the guilt-related events. Importantly, the presence of loved ones in the Tangney et al. study was reported to be greater than the presence of acquaintances, approximating 50% in each of the guilt and shame conditions. The failure of the presence of loved ones to differentiate the shame versus guilt eliciting events in that study makes it difficult to explain how the presence of loved ones in our wrong/no unwanted identity events would have led children to offer considerably greater ratings of guilt than shame in this condition.

Tangney et al.'s (1996) finding that 11% more of their participants rated acquaintances as being involved in shame- than guilt-eliciting events could nonetheless be taken as the reason why we found higher shame than guilt ratings in our no wrong/unwanted identity condition, since those stories involved classmates of the protagonist. We suggest that depicting all classmates as "acquaintances" would probably not be true to most children's perceptions of the peers with whom they attend school on a daily basis, for several hours a day, for an extended period of time, and many of whom form the basis of their networks outside of the school environment. We suggest, instead, that children would perceive their classmates as a blend of "liked others", "disliked others", and perhaps a few acquaintances (comprised, for example, of a new child who may have recently joined their class). In this case, it seems unlikely that the higher ratings of shame than guilt in our no wrong/unwanted identity condition could be accounted for by perceptions that classmates are mere acquaintances as opposed to people toward whom they feel a definite affinity or disaffinity. All things considered, therefore, it seems unlikely that audience characteristics can account for the differential pattern of guilt and shame ratings found in our different conditions, although future research would do well to control for these characteristics.

In terms of the language issue, it could be argued that the Dutch children may have confused the term "shame" with "embarrassment". In Dutch (as in certain other European languages, e.g., Iglesias, 1996), the word shame can also

be used to mean embarrassment. In fact, the Dutch use the actual terms for embarrassment (“*gêne*” or “*je opgelaten voelen*”) only rarely. Thus, one could argue that our respondents’ relatively high shame ratings in the no wrong/unwanted identity condition might to some extent represent what native speakers of English would call embarrassment. We have two concerns about this criticism, however. First, it reifies a distinction between shame versus embarrassment when there still is considerable debate regarding whether shame and embarrassment are distinct emotions (Tangney et al., 1996) or whether they represent the same underlying feeling state or emotion family (e.g., Sabini, Garvey, & Hall, 2001). Second, and more importantly, Tangney et al. (1996) found that experiences of embarrassment differ from experiences of shame in that embarrassed individuals consider the situation, at least in hindsight, to have been rather funny and they also have the impression that others were amused. Since it is difficult to imagine that such features would characterise children’s experiences in the epileptic-fit-, wearing-a-helmet-, and scratched-legs-events that we used, it can safely be assumed that our respondents’ shame ratings did reflect shame rather than embarrassment.

Finally, evidence undermining both the domain- and the language-based criticisms of our conclusions comes from two studies in which adult native speakers of English rated nonillness-related events drawn from an independent set of adult respondents’ personal lives (Alberico et al., 1998; Ferguson et al., 2000a). When using the same categories of events, the patterns of guilt and shame ratings that were obtained were quite similar to those obtained in the present study, thus rendering both a domain- and a language-based explanation of our findings implausible.

In summary, our findings support the morality-identity distinction rather than the self-behaviour or self-the thing done distinction between guilt and shame. This new distinction highlights the very conditions under which one will and will not find high ratings of guilt only, high ratings of shame only, high ratings of both, or high ratings of neither. Sufficient data have accumulated in the past decade of active attention to guilt and shame to suggest that the self-behaviour or self-the thing done distinction is an extremely valuable one, but does not completely account for all of the findings. Our distinction between guilt as a primarily morally relevant emotional response and shame as a primarily identity-relevant emotional response accounts for more of the findings more neatly.

The second aim of the present research was to ascertain the age at which children’s guilt and shame attributions in the three types of events would correspond to the theoretically ideal pattern. As we anticipated, there was a strong relationship between age and the extent to which the children’s ratings conformed to predictions. The ratings of children from 12 years onwards confirmed all four predictions, indicating that the morality-identity approach is sufficiently robust to not only explain adults’ responses, but those of relatively young

children as well. The 9-year-old children's ratings were consistent with previous research (Olthof et al., 2000) in that they responded adequately to the no wrong/unwanted identity and the wrong/unwanted identity events, but also with the prediction derived from Harris' (1989) analysis, that is, that the most difficult task for children would be to *not* attribute shame to the protagonist in the wrong/no unwanted identity events. As revealed by their ratings, the 7-year-olds' had this same problem, but they also had difficulties with not attributing guilt in response to the no wrong/unwanted identity events.

The third issue that we addressed was whether there would be gender-related differences in children's emotion attributions. In line with previous findings (Bybee, 1998), gender differences in the magnitude of children's guilt and shame attributions were not strong, but it is interesting to note that girls made stronger judgements of guilt and shame than boys only when the event in question would support those particular judgements. For example, girls offered greater guilt ratings than boys in response to descriptions of the wrong/no unwanted identity events, but their ratings differed little from those of boys when the emotion judgement was inconsistent with the event at issue. These findings provide tentative indications that females may be more sensitive than males to the appraisal rules underlying guilt and shame.

A final point that remains to be discussed is the precise nature of the unwanted identity that is feared by the shamed individual. Crozier (1998) argued that shame-related appraisals, unlike embarrassment-related appraisals, concern the individual's thoughts about how an audience would evaluate core attributes of the self, with a prime example being the self's moral standing. However, in line with repeated claims in the literature that shame can occur in response to nonmoral failures and shortcomings (Ausubel, 1955; Ferguson et al., 1990, 1991; Sabini et al., 2001; Smith et al., 2002; Tangney, 1998), our findings make clear that shame-related appraisals do not necessarily include concerns about one's moral standing. What could then be the core attribute of the self that is at stake in shame? In an interesting account, Sabini et al. (2001) linked shame to "public breaks with decorum that were uncontrollable, that were evidence of serious mental disorder" (p. 113). In the same vein, Olthof (2002) and Olthof et al. (2000) suggested that shame-eliciting events have in common that they cast doubt on the self's coherence, that is, on how well the self fulfils its role as the author of its own behavioural or appearance-related manifestations to the outside world. Shame-eliciting events—when looked at from a particular perspective—reveal, or seemingly reveal, the self as being unable or unwilling to authorise one of its manifestations to the outside world as originating from the self. The self is thus revealed to be inconsistent, which might easily raise an audience's suspicion that the self is fundamentally incoherent and should, therefore, not be held responsible for its manifestations to the outside world, as is true for individuals who are mentally insane or deficient. In sum, our closing speculation is that the unwanted identity that is at stake in shame-related appraisals does not so

much concern one's fear of being seen as a bad person, but one's fear of not being seen as a person at all.

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